

Negro Year Book - 1932

Comments on.

A RACIAL ENCYCLOPEDIA.

The Negro Yearbook, 1931-2," by Monroe N. Work; Negro Year Book Co., Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, U.S.A.,— 2 dollars post free.

In preparing the eighth edition of the "Negro Yearbook," Mr. M. N. Work, the Director of the Department of Records and Research at Tuskegee, has rearranged his encyclopaedic survey so that all information on a particular subject is assembled in one section. By "Negro," of course, the author means the whole of the race which has its main home in Africa, and although not every African will consider this the happiest term for his people, it has at least the merit of being generally understood.

The book is divided into seven principal sections, the first and chief occupying rather more than three-fifths of the whole space, being a comprehensive survey of the Negro in America. The others describe his position and progress in Latin America, Europe, and Africa, and in poetry, arts, and literature, ending with a useful directory of newspapers, agencies, and organizations. As a record of progress, both in racial advancement and inter-racial co-operation, the book should banish pessimism, although it shows clearly that colour discrimination is by no means at an end, even where the modern sun-tan vogue placed large stores in an absurd position in their attempts at differentiation. It is a sordid method of gauging progress, perhaps, to quote the growth in value of Afro-American property from 20,000,000 dollars in 1866 to 2,600,000,000 dollars last year, but the fact is indicative of the power of the race to make its way amid educational and other disabilities, and the list of inventions credited to Negroes shows the possession of other gifts besides that of acquiring wealth. Another significant feature is the decreased proportion in agricultural and domestic work, and the growing participation of the Negro in trade and professions, while to those oppressed with the fear of the "Rising Tide of Colour" it may be comforting to see that the rate of increase of the Afro-American population follows that of other peoples, and that, for good or ill, civilisation has a similar effect upon all.

The section on the Negro in Europe is, of course, largely devoted to a comparison of his disabilities in various countries, and one is sorry to see that, on the whole, Britain is considered to give least opportunity for the advancement of coloured people, largely because her policy of decentralisation, which gives greater responsibility to Africans generally, provides fewer high offices for African figureheads. Admittedly, British insularity prevents the African from being received with the open arms that meet him on the continent, but the same aloofness is apparent toward all foreigners, and, as African sojourners in England know, is but a superficial trait.

Of the Negro in Africa, or, as we think it right to call him, the African, the Yearbook says little, since it is rather a record of his modernisation, or of his protection from modernised slavery and cultural aggression, than of the state of the masses. The growing place of Negro workers in art, literature, and music is shown in the best possible manner, by details of most of their achievements, and although these are largely confined to persons living in America or Europe, and include no mention of the Sarbabs, Blylens, and Hayfords of Africa, the list is long enough to show Africans that there is no reason for them to develop an inferiority complex.

2,500 COPIES OF NEGRO YEAR BOOK SOLD

TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE That the Negro Year Book fulfilled a long felt demand for accurate facts or questions concerning the Negro can be seen from Dr. Work's announcement that over twenty-five hundred copies of the first edition have already been sold. This demand has been from all races throughout the entire world.

The book has been well received by the foreign and domestic press. Reviews have appeared in such foreign papers as the Frankfort Times of Frankfort, Germany; the United India and Indian States, Delhi, India; L'Independence, Belge, Belgium; the Gold Coast Times, West Africa; La Geographic, Society De Geographic, Paris, and the Pacific Affairs, Hawaii.

Many universities such as the University of Chicago and Johns Hopkins University are using this work for a standard reference book in some of their courses on social problems. Most of the larger libraries, both school and public, also keep it as one of their valuable reference books.

Though he has received many compliments for his work on the year book, Dr. Monroe Work considers the finest tribute one that came from an old man. This man wrote that he had two books which he read—the Bible and the Negro Year Book.

The Year Book, he said, could be used both defensively and offensively. When he argued with white people about the Negro's progress he quoted it, and when he argued with Negroes about their lack of progress he also quoted it. Thus as with the Bible many things can be proved from the facts presented in the book.

Recently permission has been granted to Mrs. Charlotte Rou of Frankfort, Germany, to translate the year book into German. Dr. Karl W. Brehm, director of Institute de Traduciones, Valencia, Spain, has been granted permission to translate the book into French, Spanish and Esperanto.